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A
MATRIMONIAL ADVERTISEMENT

A Comedietta in One Act

BY
EGBERT W. FOWLER

BOSTON

Walter H. Baker & Co.

1893

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1893
CHARACTERS.

HARRY ANDREWS, *aged twenty-one.*

KITTIE GREY, *aged eighteen.*

SCENE. — *The parlor of a hotel.*

COSTUMES. — *Modern and appropriate.*

PROPERTIES.

Two newspapers. Two bundles of notes, — one pink, one blue. Fan tied with pink ribbon, and bonnet trimmed with blue, for Kitty. Clock on mantel.



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A MATRIMONIAL ADVERTISEMENT.

SCENE. — *Parlor of a hotel. Chair and table, L. Settee at R. Door, C. Newspaper on table, L., and also on settee.*

(*Enter HARRY ANDREWS hastily.*)

HARRY. Gracious! What a run of it! And if I had missed the 3. 15 train I should have been an hour late. As it is, I am afraid she has come, and, not finding me here, has gone away again. Four o'clock. No, I am on time. It's astonishing how very nervous I am. Yet, it's no wonder. A man doesn't have an appointment with a lady who is a perfect stranger to him every day in the week, and especially on such delicate business. Who could have imagined a week ago, when Kittie and I were so happy in our first love and engagement, that to-day I should be in this parlor, waiting to make arrangements relating to matrimony with an unknown female whom I have never seen, and whose full name I do not know. Well, it's all Kittie's fault; and if she loses me forever, she can only blame herself. Imagine my feelings on last Thursday evening. As I was standing in the shadow of the large tree before her father's house, preparing to serenade her, and just as I was opening my mouth to sing, —

"Love, I will trust thee ever,"

who should come to the door but Kittie, accompanied by a strange man — a man whom I never saw before. I saw her bid him an affectionate adieu — actually kiss him, and heard him say, "Good-by, dearie; don't expect a letter from me before Saturday, pet." Pet! After he left, with a heart bursting with emotion, I rushed into her presence, and demanded an explanation, which was refused, and my sufferings laughed at. Kittie even reproached me for what she called my "insane jealousy," and gave me back my ring. I calmly returned the hat mark she gave me at Christmas, and left the house, fully resolved to do something desperate. Passing the office of the *Times*, a happy thought struck me — I entered and inserted a matrimonial advertisement. The next day I received an answer, signed "Catherine H. 2., *Times*." Since then I have written

and received seven letters from the fair unknown, who has also received a blow to her affections, and who always writes on pink note-paper. I have asked for an interview, which she has granted. Let me read her note again.

MR H. 24., *Times*, — I will meet you at the place you mentioned at 4 o'clock and 15 minutes. That you may be able to distinguish me, I will wear a bonnet trimmed with blue, and carry a fan tied with pink ribbon; and you may, when you see me, show me this note, written on pink paper.

Yours, as ever,

CATHERINE, H. 2., *Times*.

Even after receiving this note, if Kittie had been at all friendly, I should have tried to make it up with her. But to-day when I passed her father's house, and saw her standing at the window, she returned my bow with a frigid look, as if I was an entire stranger, and actually turned up her nose at me. So I tear her image from my heart, and place in the vacant spot that of Catherine H. 2., *Times*. (*Looks at watch*.) Gracious! It's time she was here. Hark! There's some one coming now! I'll just run out until I see who it is. (*Exit R.*)

(*Enter KITTIE, C. She has an umbrella in her hand, and appears as if she had been in a shower.*)

KITTIE. I wonder if anybody saw me come in. I do wish I had refused to come. If it had not commenced to rain just before I got to the door, I should have gone on without coming in; but now I must wait until the shower is over. Oh, I will pay Mr. Harry Andrews for his absurd jealousy! To do that, I would meet anybody. As if he had the right to dictate to me now! A pretty life I should lead after we were married! I wonder how I will know the unknown when he comes. Let me see. He will carry the pink notes, and — pshaw! I shall know him anyway as soon as I see him, for he says he has been crossed in love, and there will be an affinity between us that needs no outside mark of recognition. My! there's some one coming! What shall I do! Oh, over here — (*Sits on sofa, R., and holds newspaper before her face in such a way as to hide it from HARRY, who enters at C.*)

HARRY (*who sees KITTIE on sofa*). By Jove, she's here! Now, shall I begin the conversation at once, or shall I wait for her to recognize me?

KITTIE (*aside*). Gracious me! There is the man! I wish I was at home.

HARRY (*coughing loudly*). Ahem!

KITTIE (*aside*). The bold person! He wants to attract my attention, but he shall not see my face if I can help it. (*Holds newspaper closer before her face.*)

HARRY. Why in the Dickens don't she speak? and what makes her hold that paper so I can't see her face? Maybe it isn't her.

(KITTIE's fan, tied with pink bow, falls to the floor.) No, there's the fan! (KITTIE stoops to pick up the fan, and in doing so the blue bonnet shows above the edge of the paper), and the blue bonnet! Yes, Catherine — it must be Catherine — but why don't she show herself and recognize me? Ahem!

KITTIE (*aside*). The impudent thing! He'll speak next. I wish I knew what he looks like.

HARRY (*aside*). Great Cæsar! Maybe she's one of those black-mailing creatures, and is making a sketch of my face, which, together with my letters, would be just what she would want for a breach-of-promise case; but two can play at the same game, miss. (*Sits L., and holds up paper exactly in the same position as KITTIE has hers.*)

KITTIE. I am dying to see what he is like. I wonder what he is doing now. I'll see. (*Looks over top of paper.*)

HARRY. I wonder what she is up to now. I'll just take a peep. (*They both look over top of paper, and immediately drop their heads.*)

KITTIE (*aside*). My goodness! I wonder if he saw me.

HARRY (*aside*). I was right. It's lucky I caught on to her game in time.

KITTIE (*aside*). I wish I was at home. I wonder if I could get out without his seeing my face. But how — yes, I have it! (*Tears a little hole in centre of paper, and starts toward C. door.*)

HARRY. She's got her evidence, and is going away — but not if I can help it. (*He starts up and closes the door.*)

KITTIE. Oh! (*Reseats herself on sofa.*) What shall I do! He's determined not to let me go until he sees who I am.

HARRY. This is ridiculous. We can't sit here like this all day. Maybe, after all, she only wants me to break the ice. (*Aloud to KITTIE.*) Pleasant day, miss.

KITTIE. Yes; quite pleasant, indeed.

HARRY. Quite warm; don't you think so?

KITTIE. Yes; quite warm

HARRY. Nice little shower we are having.

KITTIE. 'Most too wet for comfort.

HARRY. You think so?

KITTIE. Yes; it nearly always is wet when it rains.

HARRY (*after a pause*). Yes; especially when it rains as hard as it does now. Since it seems we will be obliged to stay here together until the rain ceases, allow me to present you my card. (*Aside.*) My Cousin Dick's. (*He gives her the card, and takes the paper from before his face.*)

KITTIE. Mr. Richard White! Harry's Cousin Dick! How fortunate! I need not be afraid any longer. (*Lowers paper from her face.*)

HARRY } (*together.*) } By Jove, it's Kittie!

KITTIE } } Harry, as I live!

(*They look at each other in amazement.*)

HARRY (*aside*). Kittie! What if she should discover my reason for being here!

KITTIE. If Harry should find out that I am here to meet an unknown gentleman, I am lost.

HARRY (*coldly*). Good-afternoon, Miss Grey.

KITTIE (*very dignified*). Mr. Andrews, I am really surprised to see you.

HARRY. Pleasant day.

KITTIE. Yes; I have been out walking and — (*aside*) what a lovely excuse for my being here! — there came up a rain, so I stopped in here.

HARRY. About three miles from where you live. Do you often walk this far from home?

KITTIE (*aside*). He suspects something. (*Aloud.*) Yes, quite often; that is, my dressmaker lives in this neighborhood, and I called to have a dress fitted, and — the day was so warm that I just stepped into — (*Voice outside*: “*This way, please; the party is waiting in here.*”)

KITTIE (*aside*). Good heavens! my unknown! I am lost! He is sure to recognize me, and what will Harry think!

HARRY (*aside*). The dickens! There comes Catherine H. 2., *Times*, and she will find me here with Kittie, and Kittie will find I have arranged a meeting with Catherine H. 2., — O Lord, what shall I do?

(*Both walk up stage and down front again excitedly.*)

KITTIE (*aside*). I must pretend to know Harry, and be on loving terms with him. Then, when we are alone again, I can explain.

HARRY (*aside*). If she comes in, I can pretend that Kitty is my sweetheart, and that I am here to meet no one. (*Going over to KITTIE.*) Ah, quite a pretty fan you carry, Miss Grey.

KITTIE (*startled; aside*). He notices my fan and the pink ribbon. He must suspect something. I must deceive him. (*Aloud.*) Hem! “Miss Grey!” Is that the way you speak to one you know as well as you do me — Harry?

HARRY (*aside*). She wants to make up with me. I’ll accomplish a double stroke, — deceive the unknown, and make it up with Kittie. I — ah — beg pardon, Miss — Kittie — but I was not sure that you would allow me — to — that is — after — the —

KITTIE. O Harry, I hope that you will not allude to our little quarrel. Such little tiffs as that are quite the thing among people who are — that is — I mean —

HARRY (*aside*). She certainly does want to make it up. (*Sits beside her.*) Engaged. Yes, Kittie — (*He takes her fan. Both embarrassed.*) What a pretty pink ribbon!

KITTIE (*aside*). He knows it all. (*Aloud.*) Ha! ha! That is not pink; it’s blue, a pale blue!

HARRY. No — why I should say your bonnet was trimmed with blue.

KITTIE (*aside*). How can he be so cruel! No, no; my bonnet is trimmed with pink, and (*pointing to fan*) this is blue, and this (*pointing to bonnet*) is pink.

HARRY. You don't say!

KITTIE (*aside*). Oh, I know if he keeps on I will have to confess all, and what will he think of me!

HARRY (*aside*). How strangely Kittie is acting! Can it be possible she knows why I am here? (*Takes pink letter from his pocket and places it beside the fan. Aloud.*) And what color would you call this, Miss Kittie?

KITTIE (*gasping, aside*). My letter! He does know all. (*Wildly, aloud.*) Why, it's blue, a pale blue. Why, I am sure it's blue! (*Aside.*) My letter! how did he get it!

HARRY. But it isn't the same color as your bonnet! See! It doesn't match at all.

KITTIE (*aside*). I'm desperate. I must make him think he is color-blind. (*Takes HARRY's bundle of blue letters from her pocketbook and lays it by the pink ribbon.*) See! This is pink.

HARRY (*aside*). My letters! I am trapped! It's all up with me! I must agree to all she says. Yes, that is pink and this is blue — pink — blue — pink — blue — (*Aside.*) Oh, if I could only get those letters!

KITTIE (*aside*). If, in some way, I could get those letters, I would defy him. (*Aloud.*) What a pretty color for note-paper!

HARRY (*looking at notes which KITTIE holds*). Yes, beautiful (*Aside.*) Oh, if I could only get them back!

KITTIE. Might I examine it?

HARRY. Yes, of course. (*Aside.*) Then she'll have them both. No, I must get mine first. (*Aloud.*) On second thought, it would be betraying confidence. It does not belong to me.

KITTIE. No, I did not suppose that you would use paper of that color. It looks more like that a lady would choose. (*Aside.*) If he accuses me, I'll pretend ignorance of the whole affair. (*Aloud.*) It's the same with the bundle of blue notes, they belong to somebody else.

HARRY. These I have were written to — to — Cousin Dick —

KITTIE (*aside*). Then I have been writing to Cousin Dick, eh? (*Aloud.*) And these were written to — to — our cook —

HARRY (*aside*). Good heavens! I have been corresponding with a cook.

KITTIE. Suppose we exchange confidences. I am really here on an errand for Martha, our cook, who has been carrying on a correspondence with a gentleman whom she did not know, and whom she was to meet here to-day; but her mother was suddenly taken ill, and, as a dutiful child should, she went to her bedside, making me promise to come here and tell the unknown that everything was postponed until Saturday the same hour.

HARRY. You don't say!

KITTIE. Do you doubt my word? (*Aside.*) O Kittie Grey, this will bar you from the promised happiness to come.

HARRY. How kind you are. But I say! it's quite a joke on Cousin Dick, you know.

KITTIE. Yes; his writing to a cook.

HARRY. Yes; I told him it must be some low creature. You can always tell the real character of a person by her handwriting, you know.

KITTIE (*slowly*). Yes.

HARRY. So when Cousin Dick asked me to come to-day in his place, I told him it would be to meet some intriguing widow, or second-rate servant-girl.

KITTIE. What a judge of character you are!

HARRY. Oh, yes; I've made a great study of it.

KITTIE. But in spite of all, I suppose you were quite anxious to meet this unknown. I can imagine how you thought you would make love to this intriguing widow. Oh, you are very constant in your affections, Mr. Andrews!

HARRY. It's all very well for you to talk of constancy and all that — I, who have had proofs before of your fickle nature —

KITTIE. What do you mean, sir? I am sure I have done nothing.

HARRY. Kissing strange men on doorsteps is what you call nothing, I suppose. You can't deny that.

KITTIE. I can. But I won't.

HARRY. Then you confess —

KITTIE. Yes; to kissing my brother Ned, whom you have never met.

HARRY. Your brother — O Kittie, why didn't you tell me so before? I'll never be jealous again.

KITTIE. Never, Harry?

HARRY. Never!

KITTIE. True as you live?

HARRY. True as I live!

KITTIE. Then give me back my ring.

HARRY (*placing the ring on her finger*). And now we are engaged all over again. (*Solemnly.*) But I tell you what, Kittie, you came near losing me.

KITTIE. How so?

HARRY. I was going to propose to your cook.

KITTIE. Harry Andrews! then it was you who received those letters I wrote?

HARRY. And you who wrote those letters I received?

KITTIE. O Harry — (*Bursts out laughing.*)

HARRY. O Kittie — you — Oh, I shall die — (*Both laugh heartily.*)

KITTIE. And I came here to meet you, and you to meet me!

HARRY. And I was mad at you.

KITTIE. And I was mad at you.

HARRY. I did it just for spite.

KITTIE. So did I.

HARRY. And we've made it all up, and we're never going to quarrel again.

KITTIE. Never! For fear we might not be so lucky in our next experience with —

HARRY. A Matrimonial Advertisement.

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ACT II. THE SECOND DAY. — The lawn near the parade ground. The holiday soldier. Johnnie in trouble. An "American aristocrat." Cadwallader frightened. Biggs indignant. The Indian outbreak. Segura's plan. A cunning plot. The marriage certificate. Paul and Retta. Some clever acting. Segura's triumph. The quarrel. A broken engagement. "Boots and saddles!" Biggs as a guide. "I won't cry." The departure. Tableau.

ACT III. THE THIRD DAY. — Sitting-room at Lawton's. The anxious watchers. Retta's sorrow. The new friends. Cadwallader's mishap. Mamie's sympathy. "Thanks awfully." Biggs arrives. A roaring row. Cadwallader's resolution. Segura's cunning. Home again. Retta's confession. Laying the train. "He has a wife already." Paul in trouble. Retta explodes the mine. Paul in danger. Death of Retta. Finale.

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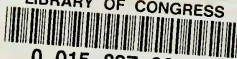
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